

What Is Claimed Is:

5 ~~Sub A1~~ 1. An optical device comprising:
area discrimination means for discriminating a
plurality of areas in a sensed image on the basis of a
predetermined condition;
main object area determination means for
determining a main object area out of the plurality of
areas discriminated by said area discrimination means;
10 main object area changing means for changing the
main object area to another area; and
focus control means for focusing on the main object
area.

15 2. The optical device according to claim 1,
wherein said main object area changing means has
direction designation means for designating a direction
which is perpendicular to an optical axis of the optical
device, and determines an area next to the main object
20 area in the direction designated by said direction
designation means as a new main object area.

25 3. The optical device according to claim 2,
wherein said direction designation means is a rotary
operation member capable of rotating at least in two
directions.

4. The optical device according to claim 3,
wherein said direction designation means is configured
with a plurality of said rotary operation members.

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5. The optical device according to claim 2
wherein said direction designation means is a slide-type
designation member capable of designating at least two
directions.

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6. The optical device according to claim 5,
wherein said direction designation means is configured
with a plurality of said slide-type designation members.

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7. The optical device according to claim 2,
wherein said direction designation means is a track ball.

8. The optical device according to claim 2,
wherein said direction designation member is operated in
20 manual.

9. The optical device according to claim 1,
wherein said area discrimination means discriminates the
plurality of areas in the sensed image on the basis of
25 distances to objects included in the sensed image, and
said main object area changing means has direction

designatation means for designating a direction along an optical axis of the optical device, and determines an area including an object a distance to which is next shorter or longer than a distance to an object included
5 in the main object area as a new main object area depending upon the direction designated by said direction designation means.

10. The optical device according to claim 9,
10 wherein said direction designation means is a focusing member of an image sensing optical system.

11. The optical device according to claim 10,
15 wherein said direction designation member is operated in manual.

12. The optical device according to claim 1,
further comprising evaluation means for calculating an evaluation value by performing a predetermined operation
20 for each of the plurality of areas discriminated by said area discrimination means, wherein said main object area determination means determines the main object area on the basis of the evaluation value calculated for each of the plurality of areas by said evaluation value
25 calculation means.

13. The optical device according to claim 1,
wherein said main object area determination means
automatically determines the main object area.

5 14. The optical device according to claim 1,
further comprising priority order determination means
for determining a priority order, and when a change in
main object area is requested, main object area changing
10 means changes the main object area in the descending
order of the priority.

15 15. The optical device according to claim 14,
further comprising evaluation means for calculating an
evaluation value by performing a predetermined operation
for each of the plurality of areas discriminated by said
area discrimination means, wherein said priority order
determination means determines the priority order on the
basis of the evaluation value calculated for each of the
plurality of areas by said evaluation value calculation
20 means.

16. An distance measuring point selection method
comprising:

25 an area discrimination step of discriminating a
plurality of areas in a sensed image on the basis of a
predetermined condition;

a main object area determination step of determining a main object area out of the plurality of areas discriminated in said area discrimination step;

a main object area changing step of changing the
5 main object area to another area;

a change instruction detection means of detecting whether or not there is any instruction to change the main object area;

a control step of controlling to disable said main
10 object area changing step when it is determined that there is no instruction to change the main object area in said change designation determination step; and

a focus control step of focusing on the main object area.

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17. The distance measuring point selection method according to claim 16, wherein, in said main object area changing step, an area next to the main object area in the direction designated from outside is selected as a
20 new main object area.

18. The distance measuring point selection method according to claim 17, wherein the direction designated from outside is selected from at least two directions.

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19. The distance measuring point selection method according to claim 18, wherein the direction designated from outside is perpendicular to an optical axis.

5 20. The distance measuring point selection method according to claim 16, wherein, in said area discrimination step, the plurality of areas in the sensed image are discriminated on the basis of distances to objects included in the sensed image, and, in said
10 main object area changing step, an area including an object a distance to which is next shorter or longer than a distance to an object included in the main object area is selected as a new main object area depending upon a direction designated from outside.

15 21. The distance measuring point selection method according to claim 20, wherein the direction designated from outside is an optical direction.

20 22. The distance measuring point selection method according to claim 16, further comprising an evaluation step of calculating an evaluation value by performing a predetermined operation for each of the plurality of areas discriminated in said area discrimination step,
25 wherein, in said main object area determination step, the main object area is determined on the basis of the

evaluation value calculated for each of the plurality of areas in said evaluation value calculation step.

23. The distance measuring point selection method
5 according to claim 16, wherein, in said main object area determination step, the main object area is automatically determined.

24. The distance measuring point selection method
10 according to claim 16, wherein, the instruction to change the main object area detected in said change instruction detection means is designated manually.

25. The distance measuring point selection method
15 according to claim 16, further comprising a priority order determination step of determining a priority order, and when a change in main object area is requested, in said main object area changing step, the main object area is changed in the descending order of the priority.

26. The distance measuring point selection method
20 according to claim 25, further comprising an evaluation step of calculating an evaluation value by performing a predetermined operation for each of the plurality of areas discriminated in said area discrimination step, wherein said priority order determination step, the

priority order is determined on the basis of the
evaluation value calculated for each of the plurality of
areas in said evaluation value calculation step.

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